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NO. 677

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

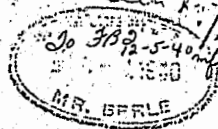
Montevideo, November 22, 1940

Strictly Confidential

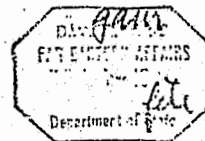
Subject: Activities and Whereabouts of
Dr. Hermann Frederick Erben.

BY AIR MAIL
LEAVING MONTEVIDEO
NOV 27 1940

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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OFFICE OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS



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Mr. [unclear]*

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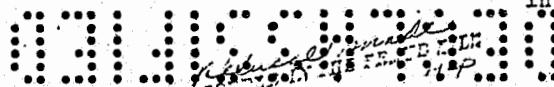
The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

With reference to the Department's mimeographed instruction of February 21, 1940 (File No. 130-Erben, Hermann Frederick), requesting information as to the activities and whereabouts of Dr. Hermann Frederick Erben, suspected German agent, last reported to have been en route to the United States from the west coast of South America as a workaway on an American vessel, the S.S. Nightingale, I have the honor to transmit a report just received from the local British Intelligence Officer that when Erben passed through the Panama Canal he was kept under observation, evidently by the British

Intelligence



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Intelligence Service, and that he is believed by now to have actually arrived in New York aboard the Nightingale.

1/ A summary of Erben's activities, as furnished this mission by the local British Intelligence Officer, is enclosed herewith.

Respectfully yours,

Edwin C. Wilson
Edwin C. Wilson

✓
Enclosure:
Summary, as stated.

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Enclosure to
Despatch No. 677
November 22, 1940
American Legation
Montevideo.

20th November 1940

HERMANN FREDERICK ERBEN

February 1933 to October 1933. Travelled in the Far East doing research work in tropical diseases.

December 1933 to April 1935. Postgraduate study in medicine in Vienna, Austria.

April 1935 to September 1935. In India as surgeon with the Austro-American Trans-Asiatic expedition; returned to the United States in November 1935.

March 1937 to November 1937. War surgery work with the British Red Cross in Spain.

December 1937 to March 1938. War surgery work with the Chinese Red Cross in China; returned to the United States in May 1938.

October 1938 to April 1939. Visited his family in Germany.

May 1939 to July 1939. Visited fiancée in Belgium.

July 1939 to November 1939. Ship's surgeon on the Ussukuma of the Deutsche-Ost Afrika Line, left ship in Bahia Blanca, went to Buenos Aires, thence Chile, where he boarded Japanese ship "Heyio Maru" but left her at Callao, returned to Valparaiso in S.S. Nightingale. In Valparaiso signed on as member of crew of Nightingale, and sailed with her to New York.

January 1940 to April 1940. Address in New York reported to be c/o Dr. Rudolf Scharff, 140 East 81st Street, New York. Was reported to be collecting funds to return to San Francisco.

Other ships on which Dr. Erben has served as a surgeon are West Notus December 1930 to April 1931; President Garfield September 1931 to January 1933; West Mahwah September 1936 to February 1937. On this last vessel he was taken off in Rio de Janeiro and sent to the United States (New Orleans) on a ship of the Mississippi Shipping Co. on account of activities on board the ship in favor of the Nazi Government. It was said that he was met on his arrival in New Orleans by officials of the Immigration Department and the Department of Justice.

He was deported from India in 1935 on the suspicion of being involved in the narcotics and arms trade. He was also accused by the United States Government of trading in drugs, was however proved innocent and removed from their black list.

He

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He used to hold United States Passport No. 248504 issued in Washington on December 7th 1935, and on its expiry was given United States passport No. 272 dated 1st December 1939, serial No. E.242708 by the United States Consulate, Buenos Aires. This passport was only valid until 1st March 1940.

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In reply refer to
A-B

December 5, 1940

CONFIDENTIAL

The Department of State transmits the information attached herewith in the hope that it will be of value to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Enclosure:

Despatch No. 677, November 22, 1940, from Montevideo, subject, "Activities and Whereabouts of Dr. Hermann Frederick Erben."

A true copy of
the enclosed origi-
nal.

A-B:FW:MF